

HEMP CORDAGE AND CANVASS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

TRANSMITTING

Reports exhibiting information relative to the manufacture of hemp cordage and canvass, &c. &c.

FEBRUARY 9, 1844.

Read, and referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
February 6, 1844.

SIR: A resolution of the House of Representatives, passed on the 13th ultimo, calls for certain information concerning the manufacture of hemp cordage and canvass, the quantities consumed in the navy, and the cost thereof; also, in relation to the establishment of agencies in the States of Kentucky and Missouri, for the purchase of American water-rotted hemp.

The enclosed copy of a report from the Chief of the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair, will furnish all the information in possession of the department, upon the first five branches of the above-named resolution.

In answer to the last clause of the resolution, I have the honor to state that an agent was appointed in the State of Kentucky, for the purchase of American water-rotted hemp, under the authority of the joint resolution approved February 18, 1843.

The appropriation to which the purchase of hemp was chargeable became so much reduced before a satisfactory agent could be selected, and the stock of hemp on hand was so large, that it was deemed inexpedient to make more purchases of hemp, and, of course, needless to incur the expense of an agent in the State of Missouri.

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a report from the superintendent of the cultivation of hemp in the District of Columbia, showing the expense of cultivation, the quantity of land cultivated, the names of the persons employed thereon, and the compensation paid to each.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
DAVID HENSHAW.

Hon. JOHN W. JONES,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT,
January 30, 1844.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17th inst., transmitting a resolution of the House of Representatives, of January 13, 1844, in relation to hemp, cordage, canvass, &c.; and to refer you to the accompany document, as giving the information called for in the above resolution.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
B. KENNON.

HON. DAVID HENSHAW,
Secretary of the Navy.

Answers to five questions embraced in a resolution from the House of Representatives of January 13, 1844.

1st. There is one establishment, of a national character, for the manufacture of hemp, (into cordage only;) it is located at Charlestown, Massachusetts; was erected between the years 1834 and 1838, and costs annually to keep it in operation, in labor and materials—such as fuel, tar, oil, soap, &c.—about thirty-five thousand dollars.

2d. The quantity of foreign and domestic hemp consumed in the process of manufacturing cordage, from the commencement of the year 1839, to the close of the past year, has been as follows, viz:

Of Russia hemp	-	-	-	-	-	5,133,976 lbs.
Of American hemp	-	-	-	-	-	66,074 "
Of Manilla hemp	-	-	-	-	-	370,341 "
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Total in five years	-	-	-	-	-	5,570,391 lbs.

The manufacture of cordage from the several kinds of hemp, as above stated, is as follows, viz:

Cordage from Russia hemp	-	-	-	-	-	4,664,057 lbs.
Cordage from American hemp	-	-	-	-	-	29,678 "
Cordage from Manilla hemp	-	-	-	-	-	348,286 "

Total of cordage in five years - - - - - 5,042,021 lbs.

3d. Russia, American, and Manilla hemp are used in the national ropewalk. The former of these costs, with the duty on, two hundred and forty dollars; without the duty, two hundred dollars. The American costs two hundred and eighty dollars; and the Manilla, one hundred and fifty dollars per ton.

4th. Experiments, to a considerable extent, have, at different times, been made to test the relative value of American and foreign hemp; the results of which prove the former to be fully equal to the latter, provided the same care is taken in cleaning and preparing it for manufacturing.

5th. The annual quantity of cordage manufactured for the navy, within the last five years, has been about one million one hundred thousand pounds; and by referring to answer to quere two, the relative proportions of foreign and domestic will at once be seen.

About twelve thousand bolts of American manufactured canvass have been used in the navy during the last five years.

WASHINGTON, February 7, 1844.

SIR: In compliance with your order to furnish a statement of the expense of cultivating hemp in the District of Columbia, under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy; the persons employed thereon; the price paid to each of them; and the quantity of land cultivated,—I have the honor to annex hereto a table of expenses, as they were incurred every month, from the date the experiment commenced until the time that the hemp was prepared for the brake, taken from my monthly reports. In addition to the expenses for superintending the culture of hemp, I have annexed the pay of the superintendence for the construction of different machines for the manufacture of hemp, which is not to be added to the experiment of the culture of hemp itself, but merely showing the general expense (exclusive of the machinery and apparatus) to the present month.

I have further made a statement, that if it should be desirable to continue the experiment of the culture and manufacture of hemp, in a larger and more satisfactory way, for the next year, so that the investigation and improvements could fairly be tested, and serve as sure instructions to the hemp-growers, a small appropriation would cover the expense for the continuance of the investigations, when, in addition, the cultivation of hemp for the different purposes should be desired, as cables, sailcloth or linen, and for the raising of the best hempseed.

All of which is very respectfully submitted by your most obedient servant,

PETER VON SCHMIDT,

*Superintendent of the experiments of
cultivation and manufacturing of hemp.*

Hon. DAVID HENSHAW,
Secretary of the Navy.

A table showing the expenses of cultivating hemp in the District of Columbia, under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy, viz : the persons employed thereon ; the price paid to each of them ; and the quantity of land cultivated.

Date.	The names of persons employed, and their occupation.	Number of days employed.	Amount paid to each.	Number of square feet cultivated.
1843.	Under the superintendence of Peter Von Schmidt, pay \$3 per diem :			
April 23	The land was prepared with 13 loads of manure, bought of Captain W. Easby, at 25 cents per load -	-	\$3 25	7,963
	Mr. Fletcher, hauling manure, -	1	1 50	
	“ ploughing three times -	1	1 50	
	“ harrowing -	1	1 00	
	“ raking -	$\frac{1}{2}$	50	
	Two boys of Fletcher's, attending drill machine -	$\frac{1}{2}$	50	
May	No person engaged.			
June	Julius Von Schmidt, hoeing the ground between the plants -	4	3 00	
July	Julius Von Schmidt, harvesting and immersing the male hemp -	2	2 00	
	Alex. Von Schmidt, thinning plants -	4	4 00	
August	Julius Von Schmidt, harvesting, immersing, and drying the female hemp, and separating the buds and seed -	5	5 00	
	Expense from the time of commencing the experiment until the hemp was fitted for the brake -	19	\$22 25	7,963
	The superintendent received as follows, viz :			
	Month of April, (from the 23d) -	6	18 00	
	“ May -	31	93 00	
	“ June -	30	90 00	
	“ July -	31	93 00	
	“ August -	31	93 00	
	Amount to the time of harvest -	129	\$387 00	

After the harvest of the hemp, the commenced work at the following machinery for the manufacture of hemp was continued, of which several

are already finished, and others will in a short time be completed, and ready for exhibition and experiment.

The machines are, namely:

1. A new hemp-brake, calculated for breaking green hemp.
2. An apparatus for steaming and steeping the hemp, in view to dissolve the gummy matter from the fibres of the green hemp, and to be parted from the fibres by a certain fluid.
3. An apparatus to dry the hemp by steam, after steeping and rinsing.
4. A simple machine for beating and heckling hemp for the first time.
5. And, lastly, a simple threshing-machine, to separate the hemp seed from the buds, and well adapted for threshing clover seed.

The construction of the said machines occupied the superintendent all the time from the harvest of the hemp to the present day, and his compensation has been, in addition to the before named:

For the month of September, 1843,	30 days -	-	-	\$90 00
" " October,	31 " -	-	-	93 00
" " November,	30 " -	-	-	90 00
" " December,	31 " -	-	-	93 00
" " January, 1844,	31 " -	-	-	93 00
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				\$459 00

Making in all, for superintendence	-	-	-	\$846 00
For the culture of 7,963 square feet of ground in hemp -	-	-	-	22 25

Total superintendence of cultivation of hemp, and the superin-				
tendence of said machinery, amount to	-	-	-	\$868 25

Should it be desirable to continue the experiment for another year, to complete the investigation of the best method to dissolve the gummy substance of hemp, so as to do away altogether with water and dew rotting, and to improve, with the assistance of the newly-constructed machines, the manufacturing of the same, by a better growth of hemp and in a greater quantity than the crop of the last experiment proved to be, it would require but a small appropriation to cover all expenses for the cultivation of hemp on three acres of land. The hemp should be raised for three different purposes, viz: hemp for cables, for sailcloth or linen, and for seed.

The investigation and experiments of the last year could not be completed, as they should have been, in consequence of the hemp being of very short growth, and too little in quantity, as regards the piece of land employed, being only 7,963 square feet.

Respectfully submitted by

PETER VON SCHMIDT,
*Superintendent of the experiment of
cultivating and manufacturing of hemp.*

WASHINGTON, February 7, 1844.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
IN SENATE, February 5, 1904.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., in relation to the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration.

Very respectfully,
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

To the Honorable Senate of the United States
In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 28th January, 1904, I have the honor to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration.

Very respectfully,
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 28th January, 1904, I have the honor to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration.

John W. Davis	2nd May, 1904	John W. Davis
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